

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TOKYO 01008 01 OF 02 221139Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O R 221000Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6302

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY KUAL LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY MANILA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TOKYO 1008

EXDIS

E.O. 11652 XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, ASEAN, JA US

SUBJ: JAPANESE INITIATIVE WITH ASEAN: PM MIKI TO THE

ASEAN SUMMIT?

SUMMARY: VICE FONMIN YOSHINO REVEALED CONFIDENTIALLY TO CHARGE THAT GOJ HAS APPROACHED SOME ASEAN GOVERNMENTS PROPOSING GOJ PRIME MINISTER PARTICIPATION IN INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS, IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE ASEAN SUMMIT SCHEDULED IN BALI FEB 23-24. JAPANESE ALSO PROPOSED INVITATIONS TO AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND PRIME MINISTERS. YOSHINO NOTED THAT DURING EXPLORATION OF THIS CONCEPT CONSIDERATION WAS GIVEN TO INCLUDING THE US AND EEC ALSO IN THE CONSULTATIONS AND SOUGHT USG REACTION TO THESE PROPOSALS. OBVIOUSLY STRONGLY SUPPORTED BY PM MIKI, THIS INITIATIVE REPRESENTS ONE OF VERY FEW JAPANESE FOREIGN POLICY INITIATIVES SINCE WWII. WE SEE SOME ADVANTAGE IN GOJ PARTICIPATION IF ASEAN GOVERNMENTS AGREE TO INVITATIONS TO JAPAN AND OTHERS, BUT DO NOT THINK US SHOULD PARTICIPATE AT THIS STAGE IN THIS PROJECT. END SUMMARY.

1. DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER FORECONOMIC AFFAIRS

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PAGE 02 TOKYO 01008 01 OF 02 221139Z

YOSHINO, ON CONFIDENTIAL BASIS, PROVIDED CHARGE

ON JANUARY 22 WITH EXPLANATION OF BACKGROUND TO PRESS REPORTS THAT PM MIKI MIGHT ATTEND THE ASEAN SUMMIT IN BALI. YOSHINO INDICATED THAT IN FACT GOJ HAD TAKEN INITIATIVE IN ENCOURAGING SOME CLOSER ASSOCIATION BETWEEN ASEAN AND ADVANCED INDUSTRIAL COUNTRIES OF REGION WITH A VIEW TO STRENGTHENING "POLITICAL STABILITY" AND SENSE OF SELF-CONFIDENCE AMONG ASEAN COUNTRIES. HE SAID THAT HE HAD FIRST BROACHED THIS IDEA DIRECTLY WITH PRIME MINISTER LEE KUAN YEW IN DECEMBER OF 1975. LEE HAD BEEN RECEPTIVE TO IDEA, BUT DID NOT FEEL HE COULD TAKE INITIATIVE IN PROMOTING IT. SUBSEQUENTLY, THEREFORE, GOJ APPARENTLY UNDERTOOK IT. INFORMAL SOUNDINGS WITH THAILAND, PHILIPPINES AND INDONESIA, MEETING ENCOURAGING RESPONSE. GOJ HAS NOT YET SEEMED TO THINK GOA AT LEAST WOULD WELCOME ASEAN INVITATION IF FORTHCOMING. YOSHINO WAS SOMEWHAT DISCONCERTED BY WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS PREMATURE SURFACING IN KUALA LUMPUR OF THIS POSSIBILITY (HE SAID THAT GOJ HAD NOT YET APPROACHED GOM) AND STRESSED IMPORTANCE THAT INITIATIVE IN THIS MATTER BE SEEN AS COMING FROM ASEAN COUNTRIES AND NOT JAPAN. ALTHOUGH FINAL DECISION NOT TAKEN BY ASEAN COUNTRIES TO INVITE PRIME MINISTERS OF JAPAN, AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND FOR INFORMAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS FOLLOWING ASEAN SUMMIT, YOSHINO SEEMED HOPEFUL THAT IT WOULD MATERIALIZE. HE IS LEAVING JANUARY 23 FOR JAKARTA AND MANILA TO SEEK ACTIVE SUPPORT OF THESE GOVERNMENTS.

2. YOSHINO STATED THAT IN COURSE OF EXPLORATION OF THIS CONCEPT, SOME CONSIDERATION HAD BEEN GIVEN TO INCLUDING U.S. AND EC IN GROUP OF ADVANCED INDUSTRIAL COUNTRIES. ALTHOUGH NOT SPECIFIC AS TO DETAILS, YOSHINO INDICATED THAT THINKING TO DATE HAS BEEN THAT ASSOCIATION WOULD BE INFORMAL, POSSIBLY INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES OF THESE ADVANCED INDUSTRIAL COUNTRIES AS OBSERVERS AT ASEAN MEETINGS AND ON OCCASION PROVIDING FOR EXCHANGES OF VIEWS AT SUMMIT LEVEL, FOLLOWING PATTERN NOW BEING EXPLORED FOR BALI MEETING. YOSHINO SAID HE

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PAGE 03 TOKYO 01008 01 OF 02 221139Z

WISHED U.S. TO BE ACQUAINTED WITH GOJ INTEREST IN THIS DEVELOPMENT BUT HOPED WE WOULD HOLD CLOSELY ROLE WHICH GOJ HAS BEEN PLAYING THUS FAR. HE WOULD PARTICULARLY APPRECIATE HAVING OUR REACTIONS TO CONCEPT OF ENCOURAGING CLOSER ASSOCIATION BETWEEN ASEAN

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AND ADVANCED INDUSTRIAL COUNTRIES AND IN PARTICULAR, WHETHER US WOULD BE WILLING TO PARTICIPATE IN SUCH A GROUPING. YOSHINO SAID HE WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE ANY SUGGESTIONS WE MIGHT HAVE CONCERNING FURTHER EFFORTS BY GOJ TO PROMOTE THIS IDEA.

3. IT WAS CLEAR FROM SEVERAL REMARKS WHICH YOSHINO MADE THAT THIS EFFORT HAS STRONG SUPPORT OF PRIME MINISTER MIKI WHO, YOSHINO ACKNOWLEDGED, MIGHT EXPECT TO GAIN SOME DOMESTIC POLITICAL MILEAGE SHOULD IT BEAR FRUIT. YOSHINO ALSO ACKNOWLEDGED THAT MIKI MIGHT FACE SOME DIFFICULTY DURING DIET SESSION. HE EVIDENTLY DID NOT CONSIDER THIS AN INSURMOUNTABLE OBSTACLE TO MIKI'S ATTENDANCE, HOWEVER, AND SUGGESTED THAT ADJUSTMENTS MIGHT BE MADE IN SCHEDULE FOR DIET CONSIDERATION OF BUDGET. FINALLY, YOSHINO ANTICIPATED POSSIBILITY THAT SUCH CLOSER ASSOCIATION WITH ASEAN MIGHT PROMPT MORE INSISTENT DEMANDS FOR GOJ ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AND-OR TRADE CONCESSIONS. HE FEELS, HOWEVER, THAT PRESSURES TO THIS EFFECT CAN BE EXPECTED TO INCREASE IN ANY EVENT, AND THAT JAPAN MUST BE RESPONSIVE IF IT EXPECTS TO PLAY A CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN ENCOURAGING GREATER POLITICAL STABILITY IN THE REGION.

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PAGE 02 TOKYO 01008 02 OF 02 221147Z

4. ALTHOUGH JAPANESE PRESS HAS NOT REPORTED THE GOJ INITIATIVE IN TRYING TO OBTAIN INVITATIONS FOR MIKI, ASHAI JAN 22 COMMENTED ON REPORT FROM KUALA LUMPUR THAT MINISTER MIKI, WAS WELL AS AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER FRASER AND NEW ZEALAND PRIME MINISTER MULDOON, MIGHT JOIN ASEAN LEADERS IN ONE-DAY POST SUMMIT CONSULTATIONS. ARTICLE CITES FONMIN MIYAZAWA AS SAYING INVITATIONS WOULD BE WELCOME BUT THAT NONE HAD YET BEEN RECEIVED. ARTICLE ALSO DISCUSSES THE PARLIAMENTARY PROBLEMS AND QUESTIONS OF INCREASED ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO ASEAN BY JAPAN ALONG LINES FOLLOWED BY YOSHINO WITH CHARGE.

5. EMBOFF ASKED SINGAPORE POL COUNS OFF-HANDEDLY ABOUT PRESS REPORTS AND WAS TOLD THAT VICE FONMIN YOSHINO RAISED THE SUBJECT OF JOINT ASEAN-JAPAN SUMMIT WITH BOTH LEE KUAN YEW AND SINGAPORE FONMIN RAJARATNAM IN DEC. LEE AND RAJARATNAM MADE APPROPRIATELY RECEPTIVE RESPONSES IN PRINCIPLE BUT INDICATED THAT SUCH A SUMMIT SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN FOLLOWING ADEQUATE PREPARATION AND ONLY AFTER THE ASEAN SUMMIT. SINGAPOREANS SAID THAT GOS COULD NOT SHEPHERD THE PROPOSAL ALONE AND SUGGESTED THAT GON CONTACT OTHER ASEAN GOVERNMENTS.

6. COMMENT: THESE EFFORTS, REPRESENTING ONE OF THE VERY FEW FOREIGN POLICY INITIATIVES BY GOJ SINCE WWII, REFLECT PRIME MINISTER MIKI'S DETERMINATION FOR JAPAN TO STRENGTHEN ITS POLITICAL ROLE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, A THEME ENUNCIATED BY MIKI INSIDER, MASAO KUNIHIRO, RECENTLY TO EMBOFF (TOKYO 932). THE JAPANESE OBVIOUSLY WANT TO HEAR OUR VIEWS.

7. WHILE WE ARE CONCERNED THAT GOJ PARTICIPATION MIGHT BE CONSTRUED BY ASEAN COUNTRIES OR OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE AND AS PART OF POWER PLAY BY INDUSTRIALIZED WEST, WE ASSUME THAT ASEAN COUNTRIES EVEN MORE SENSITIVE THAN WE ON THIS POINT AND WILL NOT INVITE MIKI IF THEY DO NOT WANT HIM. BASICALLY JAPANESE INITIATIVE IS COMPATIBLE WITH OUR OWN INTERESTS, AND WE THINK US SHOULD SUPPORT IT IF ASEAN'S DO.
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 TOKYO 01008 02 OF 02 221147Z

8. THE US HAS NOTHING TO GAIN BY JOINING AT THIS POINT. ANY FEARS IN AREA THAT SOME SORT OF ANTI-INDOCHINA BLOC BEING FORMED WOULD BE CONFIRMED BY

OUR PRESENCE. WE SHOULD DECLINE.

9. EMBASSY RECOMMENDATION: BEARING ABOVE CONSIDERATIONS
IN MIND, WE RECOMMEND US TAKE FOLLOWING POSITION
WITH JAPAN: JAPANESE DESIRE TO FOSTER POLITICAL
STABILITY IN SE ASIA IDENTICAL TO US OBJECTIVES
IN AREA AS OUTLINED IN PRESIDENT'S PACIFIC DOCTRINE
SPEECH. IF THE SE ASIAN COUNTRIES EXTEND AN INVITATION
TO PRIME MINISTER MIKI, AND OTHERS, THE US COULD SEE BENEFITS
IN HIS ATTENDANCE. HOWEVER, WE SEE NO ADVANTAGE AT THIS
STAGE IN AMERICAN PARTICIPATION.

10. (WE WILL VERY MUCH APPRECIATE ADDRESSEES STRICTLY
PROTECTING INFORMATION YOSHINO PROVIDED US.)

11. DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO CINCPAC FOR ASSISTANT
SECRETARY HABIB AND AMBASSADOR HODGSON.
SHOESMITH

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED CINCPAC.

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